

French theme park uses crows to pick up litter

13th August, 2018



A theme park in France has established a novel and environmentally-friendly way of keeping its grounds free of litter. It has selected and trained six "intelligent" rooks to pick up

rubbish and keep the park clean. Rooks are members of the crow family and are up to 47cm in length. The clever birds will be put to work at the Puy du Fou theme park in the west of France. They have been trained to pick up cigarette ends, paper and other things people throw on the ground. The birds pick up the litter and deposit it into a special trash can, which then delivers some bird feed as a reward. The more litter the birds put in the trash can, the more food they get.

The head of the theme park, Nicolas de Villiers, explained the rationale of using the crows to the AFP news agency. He said there were several reasons for deploying the crows. He said: "The goal is not just to clean up, because the visitors are generally careful to keep things clean, but also to demonstrate that nature itself can teach us to take care of the environment." Crows are highly sociable and intelligent birds. Some biologists say they are as smart as a seven-year-old child. Mr De Villiers said: "In an affectionate, supportive atmosphere, they like to communicate with humans and establish a relationship through play." The crows are speedy workers and can fill a bucket with rubbish in less than 45 minutes.

Sources: bbc.com / telegraph.co.uk / mirror.co.uk

Writing

The litter problem will only get worse, not better. Do you agree? How can we reduce litter?

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

theme park / environmentally friendly / litter / intelligent / clever / reward / trash / rationale / news agency / reasons / visitors / intelligent / biologists / atmosphere

True / False

- a) There is a new novel about crows cleaning a theme park in France. T / F
- b) A theme park trained six crows to pick up litter in its grounds. T / F
- c) The birds have been trained to pick up cigarette ends. T / F
- d) The crows get food in return for collecting litter. T / F
- e) The theme park boss gave seven reasons for using the crows. T / F
- f) Some biologists say crows are as intelligent as 10-year-old children. T / F
- g) The theme park boss said crows like communicating with humans. T / F
- h) The crows filled 45 buckets with rubbish in less than an hour. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------|
| 1. established | a. instructed |
| 2. free | b. using |
| 3. selected | c. place |
| 4. trained | d. logic |
| 5. deposit | e. fast |
| 6. head | f. clear |
| 7. rationale | g. loving |
| 8. deploying | h. set up |
| 9. affectionate | i. boss |
| 10. speedy | j. chose |

Discussion – Student A

- a) How bad is the litter problem in your town?
- b) What do you think of litter?
- c) How do you feel when you see litter?
- d) What do you think of people who drop litter?
- e) What do you think of using crows to pick up litter?
- f) What other creatures could help clean up the towns?
- g) Should there be big fines for dropping litter?
- h) Is it worse to drop litter in towns or in the countryside?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. keeping its grounds | a. reasons |
| 2. pick up rubbish and keep | b. of the theme park |
| 3. They have been trained to pick | c. in the trash can |
| 4. delivers some bird feed | d. the rationale |
| 5. The more litter the birds put | e. the park clean |
| 6. The head | f. atmosphere |
| 7. de Villiers, explained | g. free of litter |
| 8. He said there were several | h. less than 45 minutes |
| 9. In an affectionate, supportive | i. as a reward |
| 10. fill a bucket with rubbish in | j. up cigarette ends |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think about what you read?
- Should crows be trained and used in towns?
- What can animals teach us about the environment?
- How can we educate people to not drop litter?
- Should humans be rewarded for picking up litter?
- Would you tell someone to pick up the litter they dropped?
- What damage does litter cause?
- What questions would you like to ask the theme park boss?

Spelling

- dsaibetshle a novel
- tcseeeld and trained
- up to 47cm in ltenhg
- pick up the litter and dpiesot it
- vielrdes some bird feed
- as a rweard
- explained the oitalerna
- there were easlvr reasons
- nmrtrdasoee that nature itself can teach us
- Some losboitigs say they are
- an aanteefcifo, supportive atmosphere
- eblstsaih a relationship

Answers – Synonym Match

1. h	2. f	3. j	4. a	5. c
6. i	7. d	8. b	9. g	10. e

Role Play

Role A – Straws

You think straws are the worst kinds of trash. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as bad. Also, tell the others which is the easiest of these to deal with (and why): plastic bottles, cola cans or car tyres.

Role B – Plastic Bottles

You think plastic bottles are the worst kinds of trash. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as bad. Also, tell the others which is the easiest of these to deal with (and why): straws, cola cans or car tyres.

Role C – Cola Cans

You think cola cans are the worst kinds of trash. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as bad. Also, tell the others which is the easiest of these to deal with (and why): plastic bottles, straws or car tyres.

Role D – Car Tyres

You think car tyres are the worst kinds of trash. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as bad. Also, tell the others which is the easiest of these to deal with (and why): plastic bottles, cola cans or straws.

Speaking – Trash

Rank these with your partner. Put the worst kinds of trash at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------|
| • sweet wrappers | • straws |
| • chewing gum | • cigarette ends |
| • plastic bags | • plastic bottles |
| • car tyres | • cola cans |

Answers – True False

a	F	b	T	c	T	d	T	e	F	f	F	g	T	h	F
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.